Catastrophe

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Introduction

On a post-apocalyptical Earth, where all of humanity fell victim to the sudden quickly rising water levels and the violent transformations of the atmosphere, all that remains of them are the remnants of their civilization oftentimes deep below the sea.

Yet it seems as if in their dying days humans managed through genetic engineering to splice their genes with those of cats, who were better adapted to survive in this new world.

Of course the Earless, as humans have come to be called, are merely legend by now and as so often it is difficult to separate fact from fiction.

The earth is now the Endless Blue, populated by this demi-human race that calls itself Nekomimi.

There they seem to live the life of beach parties around campfires and deep-sea adventures.

Despite the fact that this is certainly a science fiction setting in the future, it remains fairly gritty and is strictly non magical in nature. Also it is not a hard science setting either. The explanations as to how exactly the apocalypse came to be, how stuff underwater is mostly still around and so on are not completely coherent or even provided and they don't need to be.

Most of the setting bits are inspired by the work of others on the board, while the rest is stuff I personally made up, bridging the gaps.

On the mechanical side, the system is designed to be simple and fairly light and should hopefully not require players to look up rules in this document while playing.

With character creation being a matter of a few minutes, it should also hopefully be easy enough to run as a fun pick-up game or one-shot.

Origin

The idea for this game's setting originated from the /tg/ (traditional games) section of the 4chan image boards.

Catastrophe has gone through multiple threats of discussion with various people chiming in and bringing their own ideas to the table. Additionally multiple game systems have already been adapted or invented for the sake of playing this game.

This here is merely an attempt to go back to the basic premises of the system without too much superfluous stuff that was added over time, as suggested (among others) by post No. 29751635. This will hopefully allow others to use this as a framework for their own games, where they can then add what they like or remove what they don't.

Design Goals / Themes

The focus is once again on a single playable race, the catfolk people. They are the good-hearted, somewhat naive inhabitants of a tropical water world.

Catastrophe

Agility	Smarts	Spirit	Strength	Vigor

Attributes are rated 0 to 5. Distribute 12 points among them.

Skills	
Academics	
Athletics	
Crafts	
Deceive	
Drive	
Empathy	
Fight	
Investigate	
Larceny	
Medicine	
Notice	
Performance	
Provoke	
Socialize	
Stealth	
Swimming	

Skills are rated 0-5. Distribute 25 points among them.

Personal Information	
Name	
Age	
Settlement	
Job	

Background / Appearance

Personal Gear

Wounds	XP

Each Wound subtracts one die from all dice pools to a minimum of one die.
Wound Heal Times (increase by level): Minute, Hour, Day, Week, Month, Year, Decade.

Roll as many dice as you have points in the attribute for the roll plus one. Any die that comes up below or equal to the amount of points you have in the skill is a success.

If you have no skill points in a skill you need to roll, assume it is 1 and roll only a single die. If all dice in a roll land on a 10 it is counted as a botch or critical failure.

Chapter One: Our World Today

Who We Are

We call ourselves nekomimi (猫耳), literally the cat-eared. But that's just *what* we are.

Physically we possess both the tails and ears of our four legged pet friends. Otherwise we are completely similar to our human ancestors, the Earless as we normally call them.

We are the remnants that survived them all. Through the chaos and the near destruction of our big blue planet.

Yet we don't normally see ourselves as the 'lucky survivors.' Our history is in the distant past and as they say, time heals all wounds. Nature has adapted and so have we.

We live in what remains of our world, islands in the middle of the now even larger blue oceans. The weather is almost always sunny, the water refreshing and with plenty of fish and a bit of agriculture, we make do quite nicely.

Life is full of adventure, with the remains of the world-that-was just a few feet below the surface in most regions, waiting for somebody to come and explore them.

The ocean, now probably clearly visible from just about everywhere on the planet, itself gives plenty of opportunities for fun. From sailing the uncharted waters and surfing to fishing, there is plenty to be done out there.

What is the water level in the world?

It's whatever it needs to be for the location at hand to make it interesting.

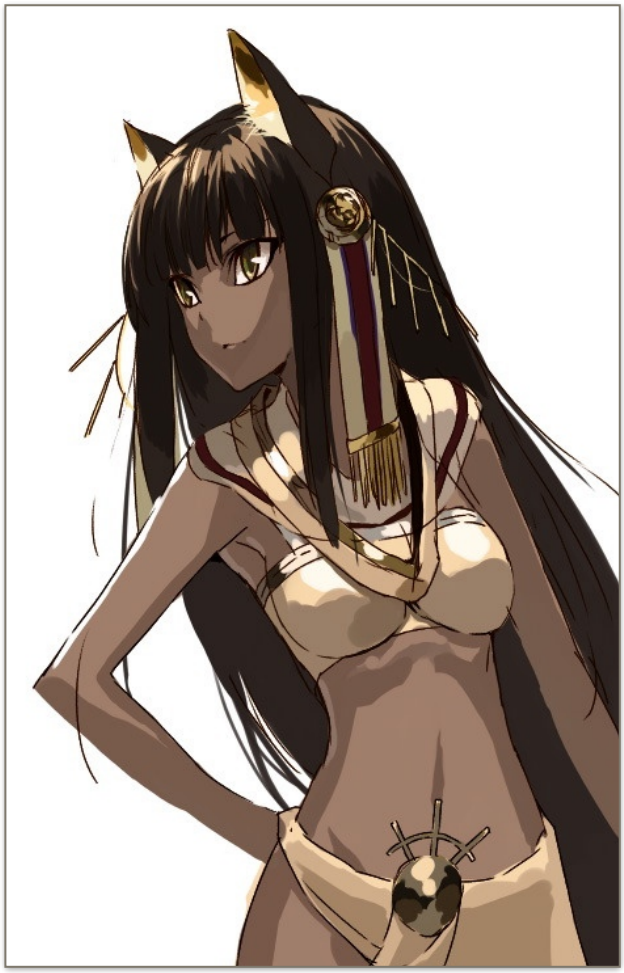
If you look too closely at the whole scenario, there would only be a few selected regions of the world left to live in and that'd be too boring.

Back on dry land, we have epic parties around the campfire, play games, and challenge each other to tournaments and competitions.

History of the World

Few details about what exactly happened to the 'Earless', the human ancestors of the nekomimi are known today.

The remains of their culture tell the tale of a sudden apocalypse where the sea level rose to unnatural heights. The explanation offered up by most is that comets of ice, filled with alien bacteria and plants crashed onto the planet and its moon around the second half of the twenty-first century, raising the water levels and transforming the atmosphere, creating tropical temperatures



almost year around in most regions of the planet.

Likewise there is no direct knowledge about where the nekomimi come from. Generally it is well known that the earless possessed the ability to manipulate the appearance and characteristics of plants and animals. Thus it seems likely that the Earless were created us by manipulating their own characteristics.

Where We Live

The Cities

Most of the old cities are gone. But people tell stories of thousands of Earless living in them back in the days — almost unimaginable. Sometimes remnants of them stick out of the shallower water. Large rock buildings that seemed to have passed the test of time.

In and on top of them some of us have opted to build a home. Sometimes, albeit fairly rarely, one can even walk on the ancient streets between buildings in cities.

What really happened to the Humans?

What killed off the Earless isn't known to the Nekomimi, nor should it be too relevant for this game.

Restoring, reviving or saving Humanity is not what this is about.

Are there still Humans around?

No, they have completely died off or left the planet after the apocalypse. Nor do they live in secret somewhere struggling to survive.

This much is at least true for the default setting. If you want to have humans in your version used in your games, then feel free to do that.

Are there other Kemomimi (animal people) than just cats?

Again, not in the default setting of this game. In the last chapter you can see some additional notes on this topic, but it comes down to pretty much the same answer as the one given for Humans.

If you really think you want them, have them in your own games.

Mostly these tall rock buildings are little island by themselves, connected mostly by bridges or by boat.

While exciting, space is always a problem in the cities. And surfing is virtually impossible with the tiny waves they have, so it wouldn't be for me in any case.

Villages

Most of us are living in our little villages on the dry places, the island nations; mostly smaller communities of less than a hundred of us. Village life is generally fun. You know everybody and there aren't too many rules to consider.

There are certain duties, however.

One of the elders generally takes over the responsibility of looking out for the rest of us and organizes people to go fishing or look after the vegetable gardens. It's not too bad for the most part though.

Ships

Well, most of us get on ships from time to time. It just goes with the territory, but living on them? Few choose this life. It's cramped and work is harder and you never know when you'll have solid land under your feet again.

But there are advantages as well. Whenever some of them come into town, they bring riches from the world-that-was with them for barter.

And you get to see the world. Long distances all around the world. Certainly an alluring prospect for those who are a little more adventurous.

Other Settlements

For most of us, leaving home and visiting other settlements is a rare treat. In most cases, the distances are just too far to just head over for a quick tea.

However, regular contact is generally kept by ship or more rarely radio equipment.

Transportation

Ships

As already indicated, ships are pretty much the way to go when it comes to getting around in the Endless Blue.

Most boats will be sailboats and while they are somewhat slow, they are fairly reliable, as they do not require any fuel.

Boats powered by motors are oftentimes much faster and larger than most traditional boats. Fuel, however can be a considerable problem. Some of them run on electricity, which, while still not easy to acquire, can at least be obtained with less effort.

Despite them being our principal mode of transportation, we use boats mostly for going out for fishing or diving trips.

Walking

Obviously on islands walking will be the easiest way to go somewhere. But even in cities distances are often travelled on foot.

Between buildings bridges get constructed and sometimes it is even possible to go below the surface of the water and the ground below into underground tunnels to go distances within a city.

Flight

While generally regarded as somewhat critical by those of us who aren't completely suicidal idiots, some people also use gliders to travel from higher buildings to lower ones in cities.

Due to the unpredictable nature of the wind, this can sometimes end rather unfortunately for the rider of these devices.

In a similar vein, although far less dangerous, sometimes steel cables spanned between buildings are used to pull up people sitting on a bench attached to the cable on wheels. Naturally this requires quite a bit of work in pulling them up and is therefore rarely implemented in practice.

Fishing & Diving

Going out and catching some fish is pretty much a routine for us. Hey, after all, we need some food on the table right. Can't just each veggies and fruits all day. Although I probably could eat carrots all day. They are damn tasty, especially if you slice them up and warm them over the fire.

Fishing itself is fairly undemanding. Get some worms or other insects, put them on the thingy and throw it in the water. Then take a nap or read a book. Just keep it shut for a few minutes or the fish won't bite.

Once you have one, pull them in. It's probably a good idea to throw the small ones back in. They are more effort than they are worth. The big ones, you pull on the boat. If you want them fresh put them in a box or a bucket with water. That's probably a good idea if you are going to spend all day out there on the ocean as they begin to stink fairly quickly. Otherwise bring them home already dead.

If you get a *really* big one, cut the line. Especially if you are in the open ocean. Nothing worse than being pulled in the water by something like a shark or having your boat flipped over, spilling everything on it into the sea.

While you are out there anyway, you could always bring some diving equipment. Easiest thing is a snorkel. But that won't get you very deep. If you want to go down to the world-that-was, you're going to need some serious equipment. They have air tanks you put on your back and a mask connected to it so you can breathe. The tank is quite heavy, but once you are in the water it's not a problem any more.

If you want to go really deep, you're also going to need a light with some portable electricity, because for some reason it's pretty damn dark down there.

As far as clothing goes, you can probably just put on your normal swim suit, but generally the professionals seem to wear rubber suits like the ones that are often used by surfers. They are nice because they keep you warm and make floating on the water easier as well.

In any case, sufficient to say that if you are given the opportunity to go diving and somebody to instruct you how, I'd *definitely* recommend it.

Going alone on your first time is likely a bad idea. Firstly, you have to know how to descend slowly and watch your air supply at the same time. But also because there are things underwater that can kill you. This is especially at deeper depths, but sharks should never be underestimated.

They can smell blood miles away and *will* come to investigate.

That's not to discourage you, there are exciting beings to see down there as well and unlike dolphins, while looking cute and cuddly, aren't giant assholes.

Some people have also told me that there are boats that can go under water. That sounds also very cool if you see one.

Although thinking about it now, maybe they were just confused. Because if a boat has a hole in it, it does indeed go under water, but rarely comes up again on its own.

How long can you stay underwater with a single scuba tank?

The short answer in real life is that it's complicated. It depends on a variety of factors such as diving depth, volume of the tank, the consumption rate etc.

The good news is that in this game it is actually very simple. Make it whatever is thematically appropriate. Just like action movies don't count bullets, we don't count minutes underwater.

Just ask your GM for an estimate (e.g. around an forty minutes or one hour) before going down and then eyeball it from there.

Underwater Worlds

When talking about the world below the sea, there are generally two things that need to be differentiated.

Firstly, there are the Always Ocean regions. No structures are found here. It is all plant based and larger creatures such as whales are found here more often.

There isn't too much to salvage in these regions generally, although some of the shells and plants found here are quite beautiful and can be used to creature jewelry. Sometimes sunken boats are found here as well. Those often contain worthwhile items, but they are few and far between.

The more exiting diving spots are the New Oceans, whereas legend tells us the land was once dry and the Earless lived in their mighty cities.

Giant rock buildings can be found here among other things. Most of them are still in fairly good condition. Inside of them is where most of the riches of the sea lie.

When exploring underwater in these ruins, however, it is extremely important to always be together with another person. Sometimes sections or even complete buildings collapse and it is easy to get stuck in them.

Additionally the entryways to the buildings are often locked down and have to be opened by force, which will likely require the combined efforts of at least two people.

Animals

Evidence suggests that in the world-that-was the dry land was rich with a variety of different animals, both small and big.

For the most part this is no longer the case. Other than insects and smaller animals that are occasionally kept as pets, the majority of life on the planet lives in the endless water around us, not on land like we do.

Birds are generally found all around the world. Some of them are annoyingly loud, but for the most part they are useful in keeping smaller pests like mice or insects away from our gardens.

Similarly cats are oftentimes used to support us in this regard and prove themselves quite useful in this regard. They truly are a nekomimi's best friends.

In some parts of the world, wild dogs terrorize the uninhabited strips of land between some settlements. Generally they are merely a loud, annoying pest that should be disregarded.

But don't let them come too close as they are generally infested with all sorts of sicknesses and tend to bite people in their tails if you turn your back to them.

The world underwater, as I already mentioned is a completely different story. Inhabited by all sorts of colorful and flavorful fishes and plants.

Earless Technology

The society of the Earless must have been full of little treasures. There are so many small wonders found on the ground of the sea all the time it seems.

Sadly most of them require what is called electricity, an invisible power, which is hard to come by in great amounts.

You can generate it in smaller quantities with windmills and similar instruments. Good enough to get a music player working if you are lucky enough to get your hands on one.

Other than those fascinating little electronic devices they had, their life seems to have been pretty similar to ours today.

"I wanna rock and roll all night and party every day."

Shiny

The more precious things are often called 'Shiny'. They are usually either jewelry or coins fashioned out of metals.

Those things are generally relatively useless, but make for excellent barter or decorative items.

Music

The most interesting part in my opinion is music players. Purely electronic ones are almost always non functional and rarely work, but are self-contained.

However, some of them are on round plates and getting those to work is fairly easy provided you manage to get a hold of a player.

They come in two sizes, one small and silver and one big and black and require different players.

Goods & Production

While we can salvage things from below the sea more often than not, some things we just have to produce by ourselves.

Most often this is done in a communal effort, but sometimes specialists or specialist communities focus on producing a single type of product and then barter to satisfy their other needs.

How feasible this is depends on the density of settlements in the area and on how frequently they trade with each other.

Water

Generally you won't find much usable food or beverages in the ruins of the world-that-was. Despite the fact that we live in a world surrounded by water, we still require fresh water. The salty seawater is just unsuitable for direct consummation.

Most settlements are therefore constructed close to a fresh water source such as a river, so there it isn't much of an issue.

The city dwellers or those on board of ships, require special machinery to convert seawater into drinkable water. These water purifiers or filters generally require access to electricity as well.

Because of that sometimes they are only found in communal areas in cities and the residents around the city must travel to them to draw water for their appliances, crops and so on.

On ships and better-organized neighborhoods, pipes can transport the water shorter distances as well. For more elaborate setups pumps will be requires.

Food

Most of our food comes from the sea. A variety of fish and other sea animals make for a very varied and satisfying food selection. This is generally supplemented by vegetables and fruit grown in or around our settlements.

To a lesser degree different kinds of grains are also grown and consumed either in the form of bread or as alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol

The production of alcohol is a common hobby for some. Especially wine is fairly easy to produce. All that is required are

fresh fruits and some commonly available appliances such as a glass or plastic jar.

Pretty much any fruit can be turned into wine and especially some of the less common variants are the most interesting and most coveted after in barter. Try apple wine if you don't believe me!

Textiles

Thanks to the relatively warm climate all around the world clothes are generally not too much of an issue and is fairly common to create your own clothes out of fabric pieces. Likewise other things such as blankets and curtains are not too much of a problem to produce locally.

The fabric itself comes mostly from trade, as some communities have specialized into its production.

Jewelry

Despite the fact that the shiny pieces from below the sea are so commonly salvaged, they are rarely worn as jewelry. Most use them to barter as a form of currency.

Actual jewelry is usually hand crafted out of pieces of shells and rocks found in the ocean or sometimes smaller shiny items from the world-that-was as well.

Gifting them is generally a very personal sign of affection and it is traditional for people wishing to bond for life to give each other very elaborately crafted necklaces or armbands.

Barter

Bartering is the most common way to pay for services; especially in larger cities people often use shiny items for barter. Apart from items, services are often offered up.

In smaller communities where people know each other, this is pretty much the norm. Having to pay or trade for everything is just a nuisance, isn't it?

If somebody needs help in your local community, everybody chips in and it shouldn't be too much trouble. In return, you can count on them helping you in the future when you need it.

When trading with outsiders, salvaged items are likely the most common payment method. Especially if they have ships, they will always be on the lookout for tools, parts or even just scrap metal.

Throwing Parties

Having a party is generally a lot of fun, so why not throw one from time to time? People do appreciate somebody taking the time to prepare things and set up stuff. But if you want to do this, then don't neglect your duties as a host.

Hosting a *successful* party is a lot of work.

Firstly you are going to need some drinks. – That's *very* important. It doesn't have to be alcoholic, but at least some fruit punch is a must-have. If you want to go cheap, ask your guests to bring something with them.

Food is generally optional, but it doesn't hurt to offer a few small things. Maybe some marshmallows if you are planning on a campfire. But you could also center a party around food. Nothing is better than celebrating a successful fishing trip with a BBQ.

The second big thing is atmosphere. Get some entertainment if possible. Music is always good. If you have access to Earless technology, you might find a music player and a friendly gear head to fix it up for you.

Just as good, however, would be to just get somebody to play an instrument or maybe even a band or some singing if possible.

Last but not least, consider who to invite and who not to invite. Either one can send a strong message to some people. Even if they aren't your friends directly, you might not want to leave out certain people.

On the other hand, known troublemakers or people who regularly clash together when they meet are bad as well.

So be careful here. In either case, look out for suitable opportunities for parties and make some new friends.

Sports & Competitions

Nothing is more fun than engaging in a bit of friendly competition with some friends — or rivals for that matter.

Normally we don't have that many organized tournaments. It's just a lot of work to set up and get people from all the far away settlements to make their way somewhere.

But if there is a big party with people from all over, it's almost guaranteed that people will keep themselves busy with some friendly or not so friendly games.

Noteworthy sports among our kind certainly are volleyball, basketball, soccer and baseball.

Volleyball is simple. Six players per team. No time limits and usually played in five rounds up to a certain point limit each. The team that scores the most rounds wins the game.

Basketball isn't too hard either. Just put the ball in the basket when you got it. Or better yet hand it off to somebody who knows which side of the court is yours.

With all that running around, you get dizzy pretty quickly. Also look out for people pulling at each other's tails when nobody is looking; that shit hurts!

Soccer. Well, honestly I think there are other rules, but if you just kick the ball in the opposite goal you should be good for the most part. Luckily you should be able to see which is yours and which isn't by the keeper standing in front of it. The time limit is 90 minutes here, but we've played shorter games as well. Works great if you have some time before dinner.

Baseball I've only heard about. I haven't actually seen it in play so far. It does sound pretty brutal though: Somebody throws balls at somebody else and in return the guy is trying to beat him up with a stick.

Surfing

Best for last obviously. Surfing is fairly simple actually. You are going to need a good board though. And waves obviously. That last part is generally the tricky part. Finding a good wave is sometimes difficult.

Anyway, the gist of it is this: Surfboards float and they have a center of gravity. That's where you are gonna want to stand on unless you want to flip over.

In fact, practice lying and then sitting before you even think about standing on it.

Maybe even on land first.

Also if you aren't alone out there, respect the other surfers. Don't crash into their waves. It's just dangerous. Pay attention and wait your turn.

Glossary

ALWAYS OCEANS
Places that have always been underwater

BARTER
Tradable items and services

DM
Usually stands for Dungeon Master.

In this game's context, it is often used to refer to Dive Master, a setting specific term for the role of the GM.

DRY LANDS
Islands and cities that are not submerged

EARLESS
Human ancestors of the Nekomimi

ENDLESS BLUE
Oceans around the settlements

GM
Game Master, the person running the game for the players

NEKOMIMI
(literally 'cat ears')

Cat people that were likely created by splicing human and cat genes.

NEW OCEANS
Places that used to be dry land and inhabited by humans, but that are now for the most part underwater.

SHINY
Jewelry and coins of the Earless found underwater

WORLD-THAT-WAS
Long gone settlements of the humans that are now mostly underwater

Chapter Two: Locations & Settlements

Sunsprings

Location: Great Britain

Inhabitants: 62

Size: 2.25 km^2

Technology Level: Low-Medium

The Sunsprings colony is home to a total of 62 inhabitants and is located at the top of a mountain around 2 km west of a fairly large city that now lies on the ground of the sea.

The town itself is situated in the center of the island near the short river 'Avon.' There the majority of the people around the island make their home. The land immediately around the town is used as farmland for a variety of different vegetables and is along with the apple trees planted throughout the island managed by the island community in a collaborative effort. Both the eastern and southern sides of the island have piers for boats to dock on and especially the southern side is a popular destination for surfing thanks to the strong southern winds. The inhabitants of Sunsprings have quite a few ships themselves and are in regular contact with three other settlements within a few hours distance.

Attempts to make communication easier by training carrier pidgins by notable resident inventor and gear head Eleanor, have so far failed, however.

The island's mayor is elected by the residents every few years and is currently a short stubby cat by the name of Jonathan. Despite his greying hair, his tail remains shaggy as ever and he delegates and handles the distribution of work with a youthful spring in his walk.

One of the major attractions of the island remains the old tower, a lighthouse, a relict from the world-that-was, likely built many years ago.

Renovated and cared for by generations of islanders, it stands tall along the northwestern corner of the island, greeting visitors as they circle around.

Culture

The main sport on the island is a form of underwater soccer known as 'water ball'. Under the water surface, there are two relatively large rings attached to the ground at a depth of around two meters, distanced at around ten meters. Two teams of three players each play against each other.

A point is scored for the team if one of their players manages to swim through the opponents ring with the ball, a soccer ball filled with regular air (i.e., it normally floats on the surface).

The first team to score five points wins the match.

There is also a small theatre building on the island where a group of islanders have chosen to write and perform plays for their fellow citizens.

Most of them revolve around the world-that-was and are sometimes inspired by books that were salvaged from the nearby city's library.

Technology

A relatively new wind-power generator in the south of the island, where the winds are the strongest, generates power.

It works most of the time, but sometimes — much to the dismay of the surfers — there seems to be no wind.

As most people lack electric equipment in any case, this is relatively unproblematic.

Only when it comes to charging their exploratory boat the 'Amelia Gold,' this can be somewhat annoying.

The boat is powered by two electric motors and features a small compressor pump that can refill the two scuba tanks it has on board. It is mainly used for local salvage operations, but sometimes if necessary also for visiting other colonies as it is more dependable than sailboats powered by wind.

Potential Story Hooks

Out of Power

The batteries of the 'Amelia Gold' break down and need replacement.

A salvage operation could be set up, or alternatively one could make a big push towards one of the southern settlements with one of the sailboats.

Maybe they have a replacement part. But what would they barter it for if they do…?

Pirate Island

A young boy comes running screaming into the town square. Pirates have landed on the southern beach and are rounding everybody up.

What can be done to defend the island against them?

Eaten by the Sea

"It's going to break off," Eleanor confirms to the mayor, indicating small, but clearly visible rifts in the ground along the southern border near the power generator.

"This whole cliff is going to crash down. The waves are clashing against it down there and are slowly wearing it away."

The violent sea is consuming parts of the island. Maybe one could construct a structure to help here?

Or expand the island elsewhere. Land reclamation seemed to be fairly common among the Earless.

The Titan

Location: Mostly in the Atlantic Ocean

Inhabitants: ~100 for the most part

Size: Huge

Technology Level: Medium

The name ‘Titan’ is actually the ship type identifier of the gigantic ocean liner that is the permanent home of many of its inhabitants as well as a temporary home to many more who wish to cross over what used to be the Atlantic ocean.

Its homeport is the oil rig ‘Kielland’ in the Norwegian waters, where it returns for repairs and refueling after each crossing.

Originally build to accompany over a thousand passengers, many of its suites have been expanded and enlarged or repurposed for general-purpose storage and oil storage.

The ship’s hull is constructed out of solid metal and despite many repairs, seems to be in relatively good condition.

Its captain is Selbjørn, a younger seaman who took over control only a few months ago after the old captain became lost at sea during a terrible storm.

The prices for crossings are generally paid in barter, oftentimes food, oil, machine parts or other luxury items. When a lot of passengers sign on, work may also be accepted as payment.

Passengers are drawn from both side of the ocean and crossings are made approximately once a month.

With an average speed of around 25 knots (46 km/h) it is able to make such a crossing including a few stops in-between, in around two weeks one-way depending on the weather conditions.

When it stops near one of the larger settlements along the travel path, a half-day leave for passengers and parts of the crew is generally offered.

For this a few smaller boats that are used as lifeboats and also as excursion boats are stored onboard.

Culture

Entertainment is provided for every evening both in the form of regular acts as well as amateur karaoke and dances.

A gym as well as a large swimming pool is provided for guests and crew

The rich decor of the interior, mostly preserved from how it was originally, provides a rare glimpse into the life of the Earless without putting on a diving suit.

Occasionally when passing near the savannas of what used to be Greenland on a sunny afternoon, passengers are able to observe wild dogs running around, hungrily chasing after smaller animals.

Technology

Diesel generators generate electricity and during the night, passengers are allowed two hours of light.

Many technologies of the world-that-was, from televisions to computer terminals, remain onboard of the ship, mostly in a non-functional state.

The ship itself is powered by multiple combustion engines running on refined oil and other combustibles feeding two smaller and one larger propeller.

Among the regular crew of the group there is a dozen mechanics working on keeping the ship running.

Navigation is normally controlled via the board computer but due to issues during the last crossing it has been temporarily retired in favor of manual navigation.

Potential Story Hooks

Stranded

The Titan ran aground somewhere close to your settlement and threatens to sink. Evacuation of the ship must be prepared immediately.

Alternatively: It stranded near an unsettled island. Salvage what can be salvaged and try to build up a new home there.

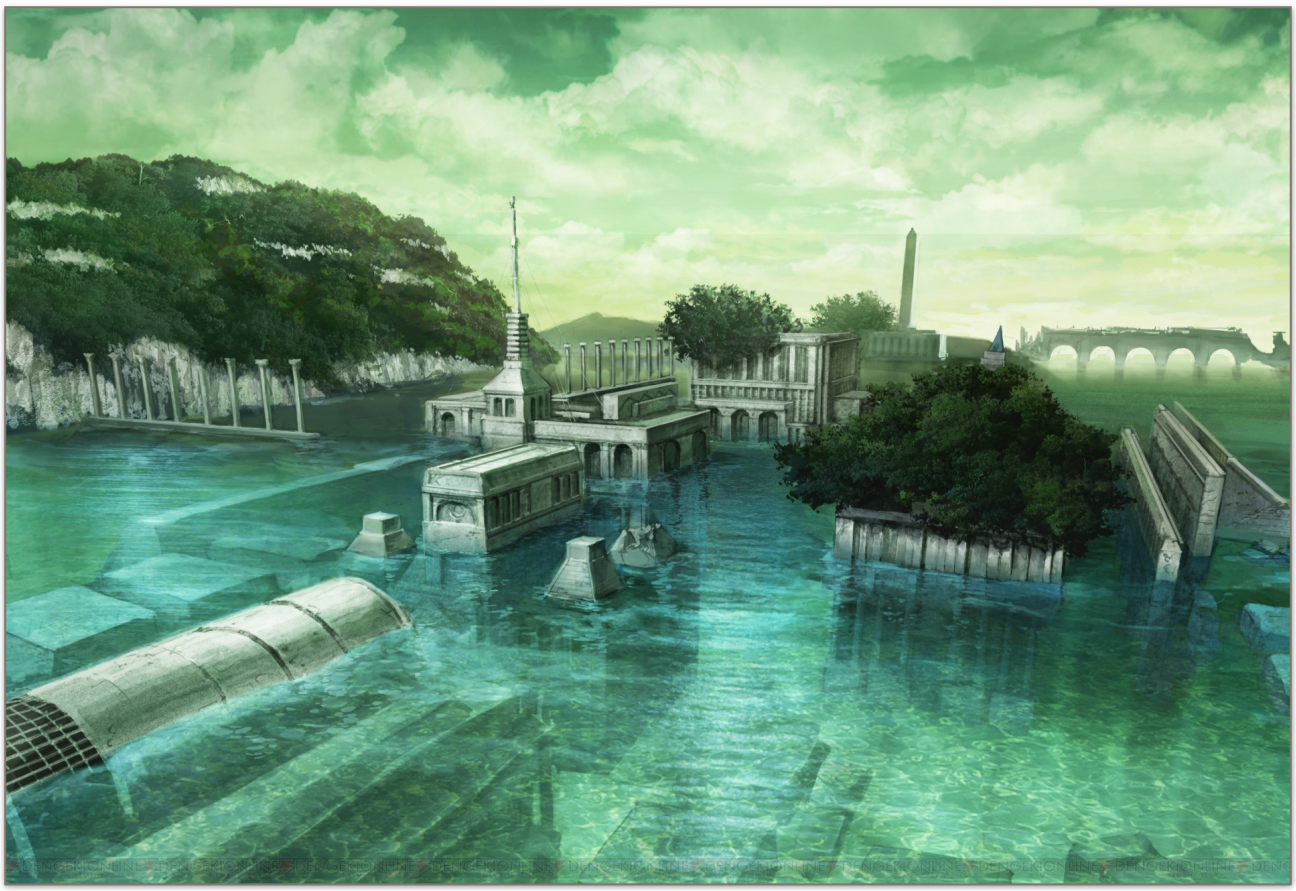
Out of Gas

It is discovered that the fuel tank of the ship is leaking. With a poisonous trail behind it, the ship is slowly running out.

Where can they find more fuel?

How can they fix the leak?

And is this the only hole the ship has?



Esperança

Location: South America

Inhabitants: At least 6,000

Size: A large area, but only connected in a fairly rudimentary way.

Technology Level: Medium-High

Esperança is relatively large city, located in what used to be northern Brazil. Due to being constructed on relatively high ground in the mountainous areas, many of its structures seem to have survived the blue apocalypse and are only submerged in relatively shallow water.

Culture

The primary sport is soccer. In one corner of the city on an open space between some of the buildings, the city's people have managed wall off a space within and then drained the water from it. This space, although less than the regulation size, serves as their primary soccer field.

Additionally a very popular past time is Parkour, running and jumping between the exposed roofs, often in competition against each other.

The citizens often use old metal coins, 'Shiny,' as a means of barter. Each of which is valued as being worth two medium-sized fish.

There are a variety of different bars all around the city, offering some alcoholic beverages and food to their patrons.

Technology

Most of the city proper has been stripped of any Earless technology as the shallow water allowed easy access to most places.

Many, do however, have access to some luxuries such as music players. Bars are often equipped with Magical Music Boxes that are able to play a variety of different songs with the press of a few buttons or record players.

Akadmee

On the outskirts of the city of Esperança, build into a cliff is a former Earless university, 'Akadmee,' which is being taken care of

by an advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) by the name of 'Zia' or 'Zelador Inteligente Automático' (automatic intelligent caretaker).

Initial explorers, likely trying to loot the place, discovered it and quickly became its first students, learning about the life of the Earless, or 'Humans' and discovering how to use their technology and understand their writing.

Over time in grew and now encompasses many dozens of students as well as eight nekomimi teachers, who serve as the 'Faculty' and oversee day to day operations as well as class organization.

Out of all the settlements in the world, Akadmee likely remains the most technologically advanced one.

Enrollment

Not many details about the enrollment process are known to outsiders. Interviews and written tests are supposedly the primary deciding factor, but certainly bartering with useful goods or demonstrating advanced knowledge won't hurt one's chances of being accepted as a student here.

Classes

The class schedule of the students is fairly dense, yet rarely structured and organized. A variety of different classes in almost all disciplines of Earless and nekomimi culture and technology are being run throughout the day.

Students are encouraged to spread out and partake and help in anything and everything they see.

Oftentimes research trips to more distant locations are undertaken as well, where students and faculty alike conduct larger salvage operations or research.

Potential Plot Hooks

Training Day

As students of Akadmee you are assigned for your first field assignment, investigating a sunken Earless ship just a few miles away from the city.

When you arrive there, however, you quickly notice, it isn't a ship. It's an underwater research station and it still seems to be functioning, keeping alive plants living within.

Ojiya

Location: Japan

Inhabitants: Around 1,800

Size: A small city

Technology Level: Medium

The city of Ojiya (小千谷市) is one of the larger settlement of north-eastern Japan and is mostly controlled by a group calling themselves Saimu Gyokai Industries (債務業界) after the signs on the building they use as their headquarters.

Saimu Gyokai has been under the control of the Tobashi family for many generations. The other two families on the council that rules the city are the Yamaichi and the Yamatane.

Life in the city is relatively peaceful who play by the rules of the Saimu Gyokai. If they need something from you, give it to them. If they want you to do something for them, do it.

They are involved in the growth and distribution of drugs, mostly alcohol, but occasionally also other substances that are produced in and around the city as well as important from across the Eastern Sea.

Culture

Saimu Gyokai tower is the cultural center of the city, readily supplied by electricity from generators in the basement, it remains partially illuminated and visible even at night.

A restaurant provides food for members of the three families and their guests and entertainers are often called upon to perform for events here as well.

Outside the tower, life is less exciting. People are mostly living a quiet life, living in smaller communes with 20 to 30 people.

One of the larger cultural centers is a former Shinto shrine located on top of a small mountain near the city's eastern border.

For many years monks, that is, those who have dedicated themselves to a life of quietly studying the history of the world as well as morality and spirituality in general, have taken up residents here.

There are no formal masses and they are generally provided for by the remaining population by donations of food and other products they require.

In turn they provide ceremonies for those wishing to bond themselves to a mate or to bless newborn children.

Technology

The average standard of living is comparatively high. Fresh water is accessible in most parts of the cities, as is electricity.

Most families have their own small boats, even if they are mostly rowing boats.

Agriculture is relatively simple with most communes growing rice and fishing for their meals, supplemented with a few selected herbs and vegetables.

Fruits are relatively rare and most alcoholic beverages are distilled from rice instead.

Potential Plot Hooks

Drug Run

The players were recruited for a drug run by the family. Get on a boat, pick up the drugs and deliver them somewhere else.

When they arrive at the pickup place, nobody is there. Yet when they return they are asked to deliver the payment money. The producer claims he handed the drugs off. Did he though? And if so, to whom?

Scrap City

Location: Indian Ocean

Inhabitants: 137

Size: Large

Technology Level: Medium-High

The so-called Scrap City is a settlement constructed around a giant oil tanker that ran aground in the shallow water around sandbanks near the former coast of Australia.

Initially found by a group of sea travelers, it was fixed up and extended by a variety of different scrap materials.

Despite originally being a ship, it remains stationary now. The leader of the settlement, currently a young female cat named Anika, however, continues to be referred to as 'the captain'.

Notably many of the cities citizens are former pirates and others judged undesirable by their former settlements. Here, however, so long as they do their share of the work and don't cause trouble, they are given a new start.

The main produce of the city is fish bred in massive fish farms that is then conserved in metal cans and sold of to settlements located onboard ships that require food that can be stored for extended periods of time without going bad.

Outside of that whaling and hunting dolphins are common occupations among the citizens. Whales in particular are used to produce oil for use in lamps and soap.

The second largest produce is hard liquor, primarily clear vodka for export and local consumption.

Culture

The primary source of entertainment in the city comes from gambling in the form of relatively simple card and dice games.

Physical competitions requiring strength, dexterity or stamina are also particularly popular. In particular wrestling, weight lifting, darts and races.

For those less inclined to spend their time in the gym, a few of other options remain.

A small library provides access to Earless literature of the past few centuries thanks to a collection of books that have been discovered in a watertight container a few decades ago.

Additionally a bar with a record player and a few selected records provides some after work relaxation to the worker.

Lastly, a film night is hosted every so often where one of two movie reels is shown in Super 8 format:

- The first 42, as well as the last 11 minutes of North by Northwest.
- The original Planet Of The Apes without the last half hour of the movie.

Technology

The settlement is powered by four large wind generators that generally provide enough electricity for all people.

It is furthermore equipped with electric light throughout the ship and is operating a shortwave radio station, with which they manage to stay in semi-regular contact with other settlements as distant as South America or Africa.

Potential Plot Hooks

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Chapter Three: Game Mechanics

Resolution Mechanic

Dice Type

The resolution mechanic used in Catastrophe is based around d10 dice, which is a ten-sided dice. These dice are often marked from 0 to 9. The number zero will, however be read as ten instead (as dice generally always begin with a one).

Whenever a roll is required you will need to roll at least one of these dice and with high attribute levels it will be more, so if you want to be on the safe side, get yourself around six of these dice.

Counting Successes

Whenever you are asked to roll your dice, you will often have a pool of dice. However, unlike in most board games, you don't add them up.

Instead you are trying to roll as many of these dice under a specific number (from one to ten). The number of dice that come up *below or equal* to this number is what we call the number of successes achieved on a roll.

For example if your target number is 4 and you roll three dice with the results 1, 4, 8, then you managed to achieve two successes.

Generally to complete simple tasks a simple success is sufficient. Scoring multiple successes, however, will sometimes allow you to accomplish better results.

If you score no successes on a roll, you likely failed the task you were trying to accomplish with your character.

Botch

If on your roll all your dice come up as 10, then you suffer what is called a Botch or a Critical Failure. This generally means that bad things will happen. You didn't just fail what you set out to do, you likely made it worse somehow.

But don't worry too much about it. You'll probably have a chance to fix it. And in any case, stuff like this is what makes a game exciting.

Contested Actions

When two characters are competing against each other for something, they both roll the same attribute and skill combination. Whoever scores more successes is considered the winner.

Extended Actions

Sometimes a character must invest many different tests over time in order to achieve something. For example the repair of a radio found underwater is surely not something that can just be accomplished overnight.

In these cases the Game Master sets a target number of successes to accomplish the task and the period of time that passes between rolls.

A character may now roll once for each time they invest the set period of time into accomplishing this task, adding up all the successes scored on all these rolls until the number set by the GM is reached.

Only then is the task completed.

If one of the rolls ends up as a botch, it is the GM's call what to do. Generally resetting the successes gained already to zero is appropriate. Sometimes the action ends and cannot be attempted again.

Extended and Contested Actions

Both of these systems can also be combined, for example if two characters are playing a game of badminton against each other.

The GM sets the time period to be 5 minutes of game time. The successes the players achieve on their roll are their score. Whoever manages to get over 10 first wins the game.

Supported Actions

Sometimes two or even more players want to cooperate on the completion of a task. In this case one of them becomes the primary agent, whereas everybody else is a supporter.

First all the supporters roll the dice pool required for the action and count all of their successes together.

Now the primary agent rolls as normal, but they receive as many additional bonus dice in their dice pool as the supporters managed to gain in successes on their rolls.

Attributes

Characters in Catastrophe all have five attributes, describing their raw potential. Each of them is rated with a number ranging from 0 to 5. This number will be the amount of additional dice in your dice pool when it comes to resolving actions concerning this Attribute. What this means is that, when you roll with an attribute, add one to its rating. This is the number of d10 dice you will need for this roll.

- **Agility** describes a character's nimbleness, quickness, and dexterity.
- **Smarts** shows a characters general knowledge about the world and culture, and their ability to 'think on their feet.'
- **Spirit** is an expression of a character's inner strength, their willpower, wisdom and charm.
- **Strength** is raw physical power and a measure of a character's fitness.
- **Vigor** is a measure of endurance, pain resistance, and the ability to tolerate the effects such as those of poisons or toxins.

Skills

Skills are what is used to describe the refinement of the raw potential. Without any knowledge about how to do something, even the most talented character will have trouble.

All Skills are rated from 0 to 5. The value of a skill is the number your dice need to be rolled under when a task is governed by a specific skill.

If a skill is ranked at zero, since you cannot roll a zero, you may only use a single die and you will only succeed on a roll of a one.

Also keep in mind here that a result of ten will be a botch.

Skills vs. Attributes

In this system both Skills and Attributes are immensely important for scoring successes on rolls.

Attributes are potential successes. You roll more dice and thus could theoretically score more successes.

If somebody is intelligent, they have the potential to be a good doctor. If they aren't trained in Medicine, however, that potential won't help them.

Skills are what enable a character to transform potential success into actual successes.

Skill List

Academics

Describes a characters general level of education and literacy in a variety of contexts ranging from the humanities to science.

Athletics

A character's ability to exercise on land, ranging from playing sports to climbing up structures.

Crafts

Encompasses the creation as well as the repair of mechanical or electrical machines.

Deceive

Deceive is the skill about lying to or misdirecting other people.

Drive

Handling of vehicles such as boats, cars, motorbikes or other vehicles, as well as riding animals.

Empathy

Try and understand others emotions and spot changes in their mood.

Fight

Engage people in physical combat using either with or without weapons.

Investigate

Find things that are hidden by concentrated effort and active observation.

Larceny

Larceny is everything from simply stealing things to breaking and entering or pickpocketing.

Medicine

Taking care of wounds, first aid and general knowledge of anatomy and medical procedures.

Notice

Notice is a general perception skill and describes passive, superficial observation of ones surroundings and the reaction to sudden events.

Performance

Creation of art in any form, ranging from music, dance to painting and sand castle building.

Provoke

Intimidate people with a display of strength or threats, real or veiled, to make them do or say what you want them to. Or just be a jerk and ruin their day.

Socialize

Interact with people in a friendly manner, trying to make them like you or persuade them.

Stealth

Avoid detection and move about unseen by others.

Swimming

A character's ability to handle themselves when in or under water.

Physical Combat

Initiative

All people involved are ranked based on their Notice skill. If two people have the same Notice skill, they are ranked in order of their Agility. If they have the same Agility score as well, the GM randomly determines their order.

Combat proceeds in order of initiative until one side gives up or is unable to continue.

During Combat

If the person chooses to attack, they declare who they want to attack, then roll the dice. Their opponent suffers as many wounds as the person managed to score successes on their roll.

- **Brawling:** Strength/Fight
- **Shooting/Throwing:** Agility/Fight

If a person wants to defend either themselves or somebody else, they cannot attack this round.

Until their next turn, whenever the protected character would suffer a wound, the protector rolls Vigor/Fight and negates as many potential wounds as they had successes on the roll.

Health and Recovery

Each time a character takes a point of damage, they suffer a wound. For each wound the character possesses, they loose one die in any dice pool until they reach the minimum of one die.

The recovery rate of wounds depends on how many wounds they suffered. For each wound they have it increases by one level of magnitude starting with one minute.

Wounds	Healing Period
1	1 Minute
2	1 Hour
3	1 Day
4	1 Week
5	1 Month
6	1 Year
7	1 Decade

After this amount of time has passed, the amount of wounds is decreased by one and the next healing process sets in.

A character may attempt to get his wounds looked after by somebody else. If this person completes an extended action with Smarts/Medicine (number of successes required is equal to number of wounds), the duration is reduced to half the time.

Character Advancement

A character gets an experience point (XP) after every session. The GM may award an additional experience after a major story line was completed or a display of very good roleplaying has taken place.

Option	Cost in XP
Skill Point	1 XP
Attribute Point	2 XP

Chapter Four: Character Generation

Step 1: Character Concept

Think about what kind of character you want to play at first. Discuss this with the rest of the group if possible. Don't step on each other's toes and play the same type of character. Make something unique and fun.

Think about their hobbies and interests and note things down.

Think about a suitable name and job for your character and what kind of equipment they might own to work this job.

Example

Steve wants to play a ship captain who is good at undersea exploration.

Step 2: Pick Stats

Attributes

There are five attributes. Distribute a total of 12 points among them as you see fit.

Skills

For the 16 skills in this game you have a total of 25 points to distribute, similar to the attributes you did before.

Skills vs. Attributes

Unlike a lot of other games, to be successful at a task in this system you will require both skill points and attribute points when doing something.

In fact having one additional skill point in a roll is almost always better than having one additional attribute point in your roll.

So if you want to be good at something, invest skill points into those Skills.

But be careful not to overspecialize too much. Performing tasks in which you have no skill points at all will almost always fail. Or worse still, critically fail.

As a rough guideline you are going to want at least two or three skill points in Skills your character should seriously be good in.

If you want to be at least able to have a reasonable chance of success for a specific kind of task you will likely want at least one skill point in the skill that governs this task.

Example

Looking over the attributes he determines Strength, Vigor and Smarts to be important for him and gives them a 3 each. Spirit doesn't concern his character much. So he assigned a 1 to it. Thus Agility ends up as 2.

Drive, Fight, Notice, Provoke, Swimming are the most important to him and gives each a three or a four. The remaining points he spreads over the less important skills.

Step 3: Get Ready To Play

That's it. Wait for the others to finish and grab yourself a drink. Once everybody is ready, let the fun begin!

Pick-up Games

This game can easily be run as a spontaneous game for in-between without too much preparation for anybody.

Players should be able to generate a set of characters within a few minutes if need be.

The bigger issue is what kind of story one can make up right on the spot. Here, the best strategy is generally to put players into a tough situation from the very beginning.

Put a clearly defined goal or problem in front of them and a few dangers or threats preventing them from fulfilling that goal or solving their problem.

Running Light-Hearted Games

Resist the temptation of thinking about world shattering threats and the characters as the heroes that safe it. It is really not that kind of game.

Themes normally found in cartoon style games are much more likely to be appropriate.

Think about local issues and NPC interactions. Focus on building up relationships and playing them out.

The best way to get players to buy into a setting you want to present to them is to give them more input in the creation of certain elements of it. If they show interest in things, ask them questions about it.

They want to play volleyball?

Is that something their character does often? Do they play in a team? Do they have rivals? Who are they?

Sometimes players are reluctant or don't really have an answer. Run with what you can get. Make it awesome and the next time they might be more forthcoming.

The most important thing you can do is make them interact and build relationships with characters, as those are the easiest ways to generate drama and stories.

External threads are always well and good, but the best stories are those that come from these internal struggles.

If players are proactive *"Yes and…"* them and if they aren't suggest it to them.

"You're a pretty good player. Maybe you should put together a team."

"Is that a music disk you found? I know somebody with a player. We shut totally put together a dance party."

Then, whatever they do, there are always things that stand in the way that must be resolved first.

"You want to train here? We're going to be on this field all day, so no time. Tough luck for you and your new team. Guess we'll see you at the game tomorrow morning then."

"It needs this new part. Not sure where you'd find it. But it doesn't work without. Plus you'd need electricity for it."

Character Death

Reading through the Health section in the rules chapter you will likely notice that no rules for character death were included.

This is mostly because this isn't supposed to be a game where this happens a lot in either case. That's not to say you are necessarily playing the game wrong if it does, but if that's what you are going for you might want to find a different system to run it in.

Characters who are wounded past a certain level are generally left severely crippled in their abilities, but not quite dead. They are — as player characters — likely due for retirement though. If it makes sense in the narrative, feel free to actually kill them off, but keep in mind that the game is supposed to focus on fun and exciting adventures, not the hard consequences of life.

Attribute / Skill combos

It is up to the GM to pick the right Attribute and Skill combination for a given

task. Also when to use extended or contested actions might be a bit confusing at first (unless you've played World of Darkness style games).

To get a better feel as to when you might use which here are a few suggestions for common situations in roleplaying games that might help you out.

Burglary (Smarts/Larceny)

Extended action with successes required depending on the complexity of the lock. Three to five might be a good baseline.

The time interval between rolls might be around 30 seconds.

Climbing (Strength/Athletics)

An extended action requiring one success for every couple of feet. If it's not too steep, go for maybe four or five total at most.

The time interval here could be around a minute.

Gambling (Smarts/Socialize)

Contested Action. The one with the most successes takes it all. In a draw the people with the same score roll again. Or split the winnings.

In some cases Performance might be allowed as a skill here as well.

Healing (Smarts/Medicine)

(see Health & Recovery section in the rules for more details)

Extended Action that requires as many successes as the wound level of the patient.

Each roll will likely take around half an hour of medical work.

Hitting Things (Strength/Fight)

(see Physical Combat section in the rules for more details)

Inflicts wounds equal to the successes rolled on the opponent.

Identify Weapon (Smarts/Fight)

It could also be Smarts/Medicine if you identify the weapon that was used for a wound as opposed to knowing what kind of weapon you have found.

Identify Machinery (Smarts/Craft)

Could be an extended action for complex machinery where the purpose isn't obvious at all.

Intimidation (Spirit/Provoke)

If it's more than just veiled threats, could also be Strength/Provoke.

Investigating a Scene (Smarts/Investigate)

Requires them actively looking. If they are just glancing over it, it would be a Smarts/Notice roll.

Navigation (Smarts/Drive)

Finding your way around the sea/land is just part of being a captain/vehicle operator, thus it is also covered under this Skill.

Persuasion (Spirit/Socialize)

Like most social rolls, this is a Spirit/Socialize straightforward roll. It requires the same kind of talents as Seduction does, only the method changes slightly.

This is a contested action. On a draw reroll it again until there is a clear winner.

Repair (Smarts/Craft)

Extended action with the number of successes required depending on how common the item is. Uncommon Earless items are certainly in the double digits.

The time period here should be around an hour of work.

Seduction (Spirit/Socialize)

Seduction works the same way as Persuasion does.

Shooting Things (Agility/Fight)

(see Physical Combat section in the rules for more details)

Inflicts wounds equal to the successes rolled on the opponent.

Sneaking (Agility/Stealth)

Contested Action against Smarts/Notice for anybody who is in a position to actually notice what is going on.

Socializing (Spirit/Socialize)

When walking through crowds of people trying to gather information, roll a straight up Socialize roll. The number of successes achieved indicates how many useful things they manage to gather up in rumors.

(Optional) Faster Contests

If you want to make it short and simple, pick a skill and attribute combo. Pick the lowest from among all the members of each of the teams.

Using these values make it a contested action. In a draw, reroll if you want a clear winner.

Chapter Six: Adapting the Setting

Hacking the System

The system is really simple enough to play around with. Let's look at the base mechanics of Skills and Attributes and what they mean for success chances[1]:

A/S	0	1	2	3	4	5
0	10%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
1	10%	19%	36%	51%	64%	75%
2	10%	27%	49%	66%	78%	88%
3	10%	34%	59%	76%	87%	94%
4	10%	41%	67%	83%	92%	97%
5	10%	47%	74%	88%	95%	98%

Here you can see what the chance of success is for attribute/skill combinations with the attributes value on the vertical axis and the skill value on the horizontal.

Obviously you will want to have quite a high skill and attribute value in those tasks in which you want to be successful.

All in all, however, having a better skill is slightly better than having a better attribute in most cases.

If you feel your players are failing too often because they went very broad with their skills, give them more points in the beginning. Although with XP costs being 'flat' they should hopefully be able to buy ranks in whatever they are lacking fairly quickly.

Difficulties

If you want to, you can always introduce penalties or bonuses in the game to reflect different kind of situations for the same task. Either give them an extra dice or an extra skill points in the situation. Both ways should work fine, although I personally think the extra dice is somewhat better.

Different Dice

Give your players a few less points to buy skills (e.g., 20) and roll d6 instead of d10.

This gives you the following success rates[2]:

A/S	0	1	2	3	4	5
0	17%	17%	33%	50%	67%	83%
1	17%	31%	56%	75%	89%	97%
2	17%	42%	70%	88%	96%	100%
3	17%	52%	80%	94%	99%	100%
4	17%	60%	87%	97%	100%	100%
5	17%	67%	91%	98%	100%	100%

Characters will generally be quite a bit more successful for the same values in this variant, which is why you should likely consider dropping the amount of points as stated before. Getting a 2/3 or 3/2 distribution on roll is fairly common with the standard points and the results with this system would likely be too good for it to be that common.

To each their own, though. Some people like to play a bit more heroic.

Although it should be noted, that getting all sixes on six-sided dice is more common than getting all tens on ten-sided dice. Thus botches are more common in this system as well.

Botch Confirmation

If you feel they are too common for your taste, you could introduce a confirmation roll to turn some botches around into simple failures instead.

Whenever a character botches, take one of the dice and roll it again. If it comes out as a success, the botch didn't happen. It was merely a failure. If it fails, the botch happens.

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[1] http://anydice.com/program/3335

[2] http://anydice.com/program/3336

Skill Specialties

If you want some more flexible ways to customize characters, you could introduce skill specialties. They can be purchased for 2 XP each and apply to a single skill.

They need to be relatively precise and whenever at least one of them applies, the player is allowed a bonus die on the roll. Or alternatively his skill is considered to be one higher than normal.

Fate Points

If you want, give your characters fate points for acts of good roleplaying or whenever they botch as a condolence. They can then spend one of these points for a certain mechanical benefit on a later roll. Again, giving one or two additional dice or considering the skill to be higher are the best candidates.

Using a different System

This should be fairly straightforward. As was said in the beginning quite a few people have tried their hand at adapting systems for this game. If you like the fluff of this as it is written here, take it. None of the fluff contains system specific material.

Personally, I'd say the game would run fairly well in a narrative focused game such as Fate or Dungeon/Apocalypse World. At least partial conversations exist for both. Especially Fate should work almost without any modification.

Humans Instead of Catfolk

While this is generally possible, it goes somewhat against the theme of it being a game about having fun in a post-apocalyptical world. Most games revolve around humans in these situations would be much darker and more about the struggle to survive and rebuild.

Of course feel try to change it up if you feel that you can nevertheless capture the feel of the game with humans or you are looking for something different.

Adding Additional Races

This is probably one of the more common things in other Catastrophe systems written so far and it definitely changes the tone of the game somewhat, as you might want to add mechanics to differentiate them.

If you just have them equal in anything but name, then it wouldn't be much of an issue. This is likely what I would suggest you do to keep things simple. Foxes can still be stereotypically smarter (i.e., their Smarts attribute tends to be higher), but they don't get an immediate benefit just because of their race.

Increasing the Tech Level

I set the initial onset of the end of humanity to be somewhere around the second half of the twenty-first century. This allows for some future technology, while keeping it pretty close to today nonetheless.

Of course you can easily change this up and make up as much stuff as you want already. It's not like the cat people bothered to keep a calendar.

As far as what level of technology they use, I detailed them as fairly primitive with only limited access to technology that would be commonplace today. It's just not much of a concern in their life.

Adding little things such as solar panels wouldn't be a big deal. If they have access to actually reliable power generators (e.g., diesel) that would probably change the game quite a bit.